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Reports received in December and early January from Edward F. Wente, Director of the Center in Cairo, painted the immediate future of archaeological research in Egypt proper in rather gloomy colors. His most recent letter, dated January 22, is, however, rather more hopeful. This Newsletter presents a summary, with a few additions from other sources, of the news in Mr. Wente's letters. Following this is a communication from Mr. John Alden Williams, the Center's second Fellow, on work in the Islamic field.

Foreign Archaeological Expeditions

In a letter dated December 11, Mr. Wente reported that Dr. Adolf Klasens of the State Museum at Leyden, who arrived in Egypt around December 1, ready to resume work at Abu Roash, had thus far failed to receive permission from the Department of Antiquities to continue the excavation at that site. No action had been taken when Mr. Wente again wrote on January 5, and Dr. Klasens had turned his efforts to trying to secure for his Museum "a share of last year's finds, a parting memento of what certainly was and should have continued to be one of the more interesting and competent excavations of recent years." By January 22, however, Mr. Wente was able to report that Dr. Klasens had finally been granted permission to continue with his excavation. A brief account of his work at Abu Roash, in the course of which a cemetery of the common people of the First Dynasty was discovered, appears in Newsletter No. 24.

The Poles, on their arrival in Egypt, met with the same difficulties as the Netherlands expedition. As will be remembered from Newsletter No. 24, they were excavating at Benha in the Delta. Though they were (rather exceptionally) granted a share of the finds at the end of last season (see Newsletter No. 26), the Department of Antiquities was endeavoring to persuade them to transfer their activities to the region south of Assuan. Professor Michalowski, the head of the expedition, wishes to finish the work at Benha. Since the dig will be resumed only in March (when the ground is sufficiently dry to permit it) and since the Poles have the advantage of a cultural exchange agreement with Egypt, it is possible that they may receive their permit in time to continue work at that site.

Factors Limiting Excavation in Egypt Proper

I. The High Dam at Assuan

In his letter of January 5, Mr. Wente relates that one of the reasons for the reluctance of the Department of Antiquities to grant concessions in Egypt proper is the hope that the projected high dam at Assuan (which would mean better living

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conditions for the Egyptians and perhaps a self-sufficient economy) will become a reality in the near future. In that case, it is entirely logical that the Department of Antiquities should emphasize the importance of excavating and recording the monuments of Nubia which will be submerged when the new dam is built. Archaeological institutions have been requested, accordingly, to limit their activities to the region south of Assuan, and the Department of Antiquities feels justified in refusing excavation permits for Egypt proper.

As previously reported in the Newsletters, the University of Pisa has been working at Soleb and Professor Emery at Buhen in the Nubian region. Mr. Wentz now reports that a commission headed by Selim Hassan and Zaki Saad has recently returned from a short tour of Nubian sites to investigate their archaeological possibilities. As a result, they are said to plan excavation at Qustul, a site previously explored in part by Emery, working for the Department of Antiquities on the Archaeological Survey of Nubia.

While one can sympathize with the aim of the Department of Antiquities to preserve a record of the monuments which will ultimately be submerged, one can not help wishing that excavations in areas of Egypt proper, which seem more promising of results, were not at present an impossibility. Quite aside from anything else, the great cost of Nubian excavation can well act as a deterrent to foreign institutions wishing to work in the Nile Valley.

It should be mentioned here that there has been no limitation placed by the Department of Antiquities on epigraphic work undertaken in Egypt by foreign institutions. Since the Centre de Documentation has now as its main project the recording of the inscriptions and reliefs of Nubian temples, other institutions have been left free to copy from monuments in Egypt proper, in cases where no clearing or excavation is involved. The Centre de Documentation, incidentally, is now in full swing. Its Nubian expedition includes, among others, Professor Cerny of Oxford, Dr. Hans Goedicke of Brown University, and Jean Jacquet.

II. Political Factors

Recent events in the Near East have undoubtedly had their effect on archaeological work in Egypt, especially where foreigners are concerned. For a while it looked as if the conferences with the English and the French would result in a renewal of relations, but nothing has as yet been settled. Egypto-American understanding is somewhat better. Most disturbing, however, is the ruling passed last year by the Ministry of Education that university personnel shall have no contact, direct or indirect, with foreigners or foreign institutions. In a letter of January 22, Mr. Wentz writes that he now understands that this ruling extends also to the Department of Antiquities, which is under the Ministry of Education. As in most countries, there is frequently a gulf between the written law and what is actually practised. But the ruling does exist and there is no doubt that it limits contacts between Egyptians and their foreign colleagues which would be to their mutual advantage. It is possible that the regulation may ultimately be rescinded or at least remain unenforced, for Mr. Wentz writes under the same date (Jan. 22) that President Nasser is said not to be too pleased with it.

Another political factor -- this time a local one -- which enters into the limitation of archaeological work in Egypt is the fact that there is on the part of the Department a reluctance to take the responsibility for recommending foreign applications, even when made by a reputable archaeologist representing a responsible institution.

This reluctance has undoubtedly something to do with the unfortunate Muses incident. While the majority of the members of the Department were fully aware that Dr. Muses was not a qualified archaeologist and was not in any way typical of American scholarship, his application for a permit to excavate was approved. Dr. Muses, incidentally, left Egypt by plane a few days before his appeal for retrial was to be heard in an Egyptian court. The lawyer for the defense moved for a postponement of the hearing.

Although Muses was an exceptional case, other applications have been made to the Department by persons of good intentions but not qualified for the job of conducting excavations. Mr. Wente writes that he has met some of these persons and has the impression that their qualifications seem such as might well lead members of the Department to be suspicious. While it might seem an easy matter to distinguish the expert from the amateur, it is not always easy for the Egyptians to "size up" a foreigner with whose background they are not acquainted. It is only natural that decisions involving Westerners are now made with great caution. It might be borne in mind, however, that continued excavation in Egypt, with the attendant publicity it would receive in the foreign press, would prove a great stimulant to the tourist trade, which the government seems to be most desirous of encouraging.

Archaeological Work now in Progress

At Saggara Selim Hassan is continuing with the clearing of the east section of the Unas causeway. At the same site, Zacharia Goneim plans a small excavation west of the Mariette house, where it is proposed to erect a new rest-house. In spite of the ban on excavation (in favor of publication) mentioned in previous Newsletters, limited funds are fortunately available to the Department of Antiquities for excavation in spots where modern buildings are to be erected.

In a letter from Luxor, dated January 22, Mr. Wente writes as follows:

"Last week President Nasser, accompanying the Indonesian President Sukarno, made his first visit as President to Luxor. During his tour of the monuments, he expressed great interest in the antiquities and, according to Labib Habachi, the Chief Inspector, remarked that care must be taken to ensure their preservation and that it would be a good idea to set up a special committee to see to the task. It is rumored that President Nasser will return to Luxor next month with certain members of Parliament. Perhaps President Nasser's enthusiasm for ancient Egypt is indicative of a more promising future for archaeology.

"Recently, the new Director-General of the Department of Antiquities, Abdel Fatah Helmy, with other members of the Department, made an inspection of Upper Egyptian sites. An outcome of his visit is the resumption of last year's work at the Luxor temple by Chahata Adam. The latter returned with his men a few days ago to the mound northwest of the first pylon, where habitations from the Graeco-Roman down through the Mameluke period are located. The entire tell will have to be removed this year, the final season for the clearing. Chahata Adam, whose work I described last year (see Newsletter No. 24), is an energetic and careful excavator; the absence of pharaonic remains, which he would of course like to find, has not reduced the standard of his excavation, in which Islamic finds are as carefully treated as the older finds.

"In the first court of the Luxor temple a scaffolding has been erected around the colossus of Ramses II, named "Re of the Rulers", to make ready for the replacement of the head, which is expected soon to arrive from Cairo, where it had previously been transferred.

"Dr. Zaki Iskander, the Department's technical expert, has recently been here to undertake a trial restoration of a small section of the tomb of Queen Nofretari (see Newsletter No. 24). His method involves the application of two coats of a plastic substance to the surface of the wall, in order that sections of the wall may be removed without fracturing. Once a section with reliefs has been removed, a gypsum coating several millimeters thick will be applied to isolate the painted reliefs from the salt-impregnated native rock. The reliefs can then be reset in their original location. A photographic record was made before the application of the plastic and the removal of the section. Some time must elapse before the success of the venture can be determined.

(It should be perhaps noted here that the reliefs of the very beautiful tomb of Nofretari, the wife of Ramses II, are carved not in limestone but in a thick coating of fine plaster, and so present a special problem. They were reported to be in a fragile state nearly fifty years ago, soon after the tomb was discovered.-Ed.)

"The famous tombs of Menna and of Nakht have been closed for restoration. The Department will be obliged to provide some protection to prevent the painted scenes from being rubbed by visitors.

"A great deal of effort is being devoted to the re-erection of the southern stela in the area of the mortuary temple of Amenhotep III, behind the colossi of Memnon. The bottom half has already been set up and now awaits the placing of the upper half of the huge round-topped piece.

"In conjunction with the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, the Department of Antiquities has been clearing the huge piles of debris from the tomb of Kheruef, which dates from the time of Amenhotep III and IV. In the course of the work the excavators have discovered several new tombs, Ramesside and Saite, which branch off from various sections of the tomb of Kheruef. These tombs, and probably others still undiscovered, honeycomb the area, but work in them is difficult, for they are all filled with heaps of rubble.

"Department regulations prohibit me from describing the new finds more precisely at the present writing. But I might add that Labib Habichi has found something which bears on the much-discussed co-regency of Akhenaton with his father, Amenhotep III."

Edward F. Wente

Trips for Members in Cairo

In December, Mr. Wente took Cairo members and prospective members on a trip to the monuments of Abydos. He reports on this trip as follows:

"Getting an early start, we reached Deir el-Maharrak, the monastery near Meir, by mid-afternoon, travelling on the fine macadamized road that now connects Cairo and Assiut. From Assiut southwards, one still used dirt roads, that on

the east bank, between Assiut and Akhmim being quite good. From Sohag, which lies opposite Akhmim, to Abydos the trip is still unpleasantly dusty. For those travelling by train, however, there is a paved road about a year old from Baliana to Abydos.

"At the Seti temple, the restoration work which has been going on for several years is still in progress. Large scaffolding is set up in both the hypostyle halls, and extensive work is being done in the south wing.

"It is a pity that more tourists do not get the opportunity to visit the wonderful temples at Abydos, but until the Tourist Department provides more satisfactory travel arrangements and accommodations the average tourist will not undergo the hardships involved in getting there."

During January, Mr. Williams has taken members of the Center to the Coptic Museum and to Coptic churches, discussing, among other things, the East Christian influences in Islamic art. The group has also visited the mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'As and reviewed its complicated history. This mosque, which lies in Old Cairo (Fustat) was founded by the general of the Caliph Omar whose name it bears; presumably on the site of the conqueror's tent. Nothing of the original mosque remains; the present structure, however, is early and contains elements from Roman and Byzantine buildings in the vicinity. Visits have been planned to the Islamic Museum, the Mosque of Ibn Tulun, the Citadel and other mosques.

Letter from John Alden Williams

Cairo
January 28, 1958

"After an extraordinarily mild winter, Cairo has seen a cold spell with cloudy weather and chilly winds. We have got out our woolens, and the usual crop of colds, which seem to hang on interminably, has broken out all over the city. The inhabitants have become morose and irritable, which is quite understandable, since many of them have only thin clothing and are obliged to live out-of-doors for most of the day. As yet, there has been almost no precipitation: only two brief, thin showers.

"Despite his technical status as enemy-alien, pending the signing of a treaty between Egypt and England, Professor Creswell has been re-elected to serve on the Committee for the Preservation of Islamic Monuments. This Committee is responsible for placing structures under the protection of the Department of Antiquities, classifying or declassifying mosques, baths and old houses. It is gratifying to find that Professor Creswell's devotion to the Islamic archaeology of Egypt is still recognized, in spite of international contretemps. At seventy-eight years, he continues to work with unabated vigor and enthusiasm on his definitive survey of Islamic monuments. The magnitude of his achievement, over thirty years, is impressive.

"At present, little excavation is going on. The municipality has uncovered more of the east wall of al-Qahira (i.e., Cairo. See Newsletter No. 26) in the area east of the Azhar, and the Department of Antiquities is repairing the wall of Salah-ad-Din to the north in a straight line, including the corner tower with its handsome octagonal chamber. The work of clearing the northeast section of the wall, east of Bab al-Futuh and Bab al-Nasr, is continuing: at present it consists chiefly of buying up and destroying intrusive structures.

"It must be remembered that the original city of al-Qahira, which these walls delineate, was a small, walled city for the Court (playing Versailles to Fostat's Paris and measuring only about 1100 metres along each side) up until the time of Salah ad-Din, who enlarged it considerably to the south. The earlier wall had its southwest corner at the northeast of the present Bab al-Khalq square, where the Islamic Museum is located.

"Aside from these projects, nothing is being done in Cairo save routine work of repair, which is always necessary, for Islamic monuments were rarely built to last for eternity. Outside of Cairo, probably the most important single project in Islamic archaeology has been the restoration of the Madrasah-mosque of al-Mu'aimi at Damietta, which was built by a rich merchant of the Mameluke period in the second quarter of the 15th century. The work contemplated for the coming year has not yet been announced.

"The Islamic colloquium at Lahore has brought a number of distinguished scholars from the west in its wake. Currently in Cairo is Professor Gustave von Grunebaum of Southern California. Professor Louis Massignon was in the city on his way to Lahore as a guest of the Arab Academy. Professor Wilfrid Cantwell Smith of McGill is expected in February and the Islamic art-historian of Washington, D.C., Myron Bement Smith, will arrive in March. Both of the latter are scheduled to lecture to the public under the auspices of the School for Oriental Studies of the American University. Dr. Bayard Dodge, former president of the American University in Beirut, returned from Lahore with Dean Alan Horton of the School for Oriental Studies to continue his research on the history of al-Azhar and of the Fatimid period in Egypt.

"Among other visitors, Professor Farhat Ziadeh of Princeton is in Cairo for his sabbatical year, engaged in research on the rise of the modern Egyptian legal system, the introduction of non-traditional lawyers and law-associations, their influence and position before and after the Revolution and the legislation they have introduced; he is also studying the influence of the Law School of the Cairo University.

"Dr. Andrej Wiercinski, lecturer in physical anthropology at Warsaw University, is here to remain until April. In cooperation with the Egyptian Government, he has begun a series of measurements of ancient skulls and hopes to interest the Cairo University in continuing the work, so that there may someday exist accurate samplings of skeletal measurements from the earliest period to the present day. That such a body of measurements could be of intense interest to scholars in all periods of Egypt's history may be surmised from Dr. Wiercinski's statement that he has found that skeletons from the pre-dynastic Badarian culture show characteristics which are usually regarded as Mongoloid and virtually none which can be classified as 'African'.

"It will probably be of interest to many that a new English edition of Father Henry Habib Ayrout's book, The Fellahin, revised and brought up to date, should appear within the next few months. Father Ayrout's book, which has been out of print for many years, is much in demand on account of its sensitive and authoritative treatment of the life of Egypt's peasantry. The author has spent many years among the villagers, and there are few who know the fellah as intimately.

"Among interesting new critical editions of classical Arabic texts to be published this month are:

Tuhfat al-Umara fi Tarikh al-Wuzara, of abu-Ishaq Ibrahim as-Sabi (ed. by 'Abd al-Sattar al-Farraaj)

al-Ishtiqaq, of ibn-Durayn (ed. by 'Abd al-Salam al-Harun)

Gharib al-Qur'an, of ibn-Qutaybah (ed. by Sayyid Ahmad Saqr)

Tajrid al-Aghani, a condensation of Kitab al-Aghani made by ibn Wasil al-Hamawi (ed. by Taha Husayn and Ibrahim al-Ibyari)

Shar al-Siyar al-Kabir, al-Sarakhsi's commentary on Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani, the pupil of abu-Hanifah, an interesting text in fiqh, dealing with the Islamic law governing conduct in war, treatment of enemies, prisoners, etc.

Tabaqat Fuqaha al-Yaman, of ibn-Samurah al-Ja'adi; biographies of medieval men of law in the Yaman (ed. by Fu'ad al-Sayyid)."

John Alden Williams

Current Work in Old World Archaeology

Professor Lauriston Ward, recently appointed to fill a vacancy on the Board of Trustees of the Center, is Editor-in-chief of the COWA (Current Work in Old World Archaeology) Survey and Bibliography, published by the Council for Old World Archaeology, 11 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts. The survey provides recent news of archaeological work in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania, and the bibliography lists current publications in those fields. The section on Northeast Africa (including Egypt) is in preparation; that on Western Asia has already appeared.

L'institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire.

The Director of the French Institute in Cairo, Professor Jean Ste. Fare Garnot, writes from Paris that v. LVII of the Bulletin of that Institute will be printed at the Imprimerie Nationale, Paris. Volumes LV and LVI were recently printed in Cairo.

Publications by Members of the Center

The following articles by a Trustee of the Center, Dr. George C. Miles, while not all related to Egypt, have a bearing on the early history of the Arabs and as such may interest those concerned with Islamic studies:

"The Arab Mosque in Athens", in Hesperia, v. XXXV, no. 4, 1956, p. 329-344. Discusses four fragments of Hymettian marble, which apparently belong together and which bear an Arabic inscription, both Quranic and historical, in Kufic characters. The epigraphical evidence suggests a date in the second half of the 10th or the first half of the 11th century. The question is whether there could have

been an Arab conquest of the Greek mainland, during which a mosque was built in Athens, or whether the mosque could have been built by a "colony" of prisoners of war or of traders. Comparable epigraphic material might be looked for in Crete, which was held by Arab Amirs for about 140 years, until 961 A.D.; but though they left evidence of their occupation in coinage, no inscriptional material has as yet turned up on that island.

"A brief report on the coins found at Istakhr, 1935 and 1937," in Actes du Congrès international de numismatique, Paris, 1953, t/2, 1957, p. 491-496. The excavations of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago at Istakhr, the ancient city associated with Persepolis, were limited in extent, so it is perhaps not surprising that the vast majority of the 1,053 coins recovered were Islamic: only 19 were pre-Sasanian, and only 60 were definitely attributable to the Sasanians. The majority of the coins were 'Abbāsid, dating from the second century of the Hijrah (8th century A.D.). Among Umayyad and 'Abbāsid coins were issues new to the corpus of Islamic coins. Remarkable are several bi-lingual coppers (Pahlevi and Arabic).

"Islamic Coins from the Tarsus Excavations of 1935-1937," in The Aegean and the Near East, Studies Presented to Hetty Goldman, New York, 1957, p. 297-312. The bulk of the identifiable material, dating chiefly from the 2nd and 3rd centuries of the Hijrah (8th to early 10th centuries of our era)" contributes a little to our knowledge of the medieval political history of the frontier area in which Tarsus lies...when southern Cilicia was an area of contention not only between Byzantium and Islam but also among the Moslems themselves."

"A Recent Find of the Coins of the Amirs of Crete," in Kritika Khronika, v. VIII, 1955, p. 149-151. The existence of coins dating from the period of the Arab occupation of Crete has been established only since about 1953. This article describes a hoard from Candia, which includes coins of the first Amir (c. 850 A.D.) and his son and successor.

"A Note on Egyptian Gold and Silver Assay Marks", in The American Numismatic Society Museum Notes, v. VII.

"In view of the fact that Egyptian law theoretically requires that all objects of gold and silver, including coins offered for sale by goldsmiths and antique dealers, bear hallmarks - or more properly assay marks - it has been suggested that a note explaining the meaning of these symbols might be welcomed by numismatists and collectors. The accompanying data and illustrations are taken from charts and tables kindly furnished to the writer in 1954 by the Director of the Administration of Stamps and Weights in Cairo..."

"Arabic Epigraphical Survey in Crete," in Year Book of The American Philosophical Society, 1956, p. 342-349.

This expedition, undertaken by Dr. Miles to search for inscriptions of the 9th or 10th centuries comparable with the inscription from the Athens "mosque", failed in its object, though the author believes that inscriptional evidences of the early Islamic occupation of Crete are to be found through excavation. A large number of churches and chapels of the Byzantine and Venetian period were visited to determine the influence of Islamic decorative motives or evidence of Arab adaptation of earlier structures. About 550 photographs in color and black-and-white recorded the expedition. The discovery of 33 specimens of the coinage of the Arab amirs was the most important material result of the expedition this represents a 100 per cent increase in the known coins of this minor dynasty.

Needler, Winifred, "A Flint Knife of King Djer," in Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, v. 42, 1956, p. 41-44. This article describes a very fine and probably unique flaked flint knife in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, with its handle covered with gold foil in which is embossed the name of King Djer of the First Dynasty.

Needler, Winifred, "Mourning Women at the Funeral of Maya," in Bulletin of the Division of Art and Archaeology, Royal Ontario Museum, No. 26, 1957, p. 10-16. The author here describes a relief which comes from a tomb probably of the late 18th Dynasty, which was recorded by Lepsius over a hundred year ago but which has since disappeared. The article includes a description of the funeral rites of a wealthy Egyptian, and describes reliefs and sculptures in other collections that apparently come from the tomb of the same Maya, which was situated near the pyramid of Unas at Saqqara.

Smith, William Stevenson, "Fragments of a Statuette of Chephren", in Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlands (Festschrift Hermann Junker) v. 54, 1957, p. 186-190. A description of a sculpture with a rare design on the back of the block seat on which the king is seated. This design is simpler than that on the thrones of Middle Kingdom kings, which shows the gods Horus and Seth binding together the two plants of Upper and Lower Egypt. The fragments show the gods simply supporting a frame with the Horus name of Chephren. This is an early appearance of the gods Horus and Seth as representatives respectively of Upper and Lower Egypt. "It reflects the part which they play in the partitioning of the Kingdom of Osiris through the judgment of the earth god Geb in the Shabako test of the so-called Memphite Theology to which Herman Junker has devoted such illuminating study."

(Note: As previously stated, the Executive Secretary must depend, for this bibliography of publications by members, on offprints sent to her. Please address Mrs. Elizabeth Riefstahl, P. O. Box 27, South Essex, Massachusetts.)